

March 1, 2023

Co-chairs Senator McCrory and Representative Currey, Ranking Members Representative McCarty and Representative Berthel, and distinguished members of the Education Committee:

My name is Paola Vargas and I am a resident of Waterbury, Connecticut. I am testifying in support of S.B. 1095: An Act Concerning School Resource Officers.

All students deserve to feel safe, secure, and supported in their places of learning. Yet too often our schools rely on policing to keep children in line, rather than funding professionals trained to deliver students necessary developmental and behavioral health resources

The truth is the funds should be use to improve the well-being of our students if we are address issues like mental health. The Waterbury public schools are in dire need of culturally competent teachers, social workers, and mental health professionals.

According to research by [Connecticut Voices for Children](#), there is no evidence School Resource Officers (SROs) make students or staff safer, but schools with SROs have more arrests and more expulsions than their peer institutions without SROs.

I strongly support S.B. 1095. I hope the Committee and Connecticut lawmakers will vote in favor of this bill. Together, we can build an educational system that centers the social-emotional well-being of students through care, resources, learning, and restoration.

Thank you for your time,

Paola Vargas